University of Oregon
EC 350 Labor Market Issues

Fall 2020

Instructor:	Robert McDonough	**Lecture Time:**	M,W 12:15-1:45PM
Email:	rmcdono2@uoregon.edu		(Pacific Time)
Office Hour:	M,W 9:30-10:25 PT		
GE:	Edder Martinez Lazo	**Lecture Place:**	Zoom & Canvas
GE Email:	edderfer@uoregon.edu		
GE Office Hour:	Tuesday 9-10 AM PT		

Course Page: https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/166743

COVID-19 Impacts: This course has been moved online due to the impacts of COVID-19. Please know that I am committed to making this course as useful and accessible as possible. Indeed, these extraordinary times only highlight the importance of understanding labor market issues. My goal is to make this course as useful to you as possible, which includes creating opportunities to talk about this crisis constructively in terms of its magnitude, its long term impacts, and also its distributional consequences. In order to do so compassionately, your feedback, positive or negative, is always appreciated.

This is a stressful time. None of us has lived through anything like this. I have tried to build flexibility into our syllabus so that you can all succeed in spite of our less-than-ideal circumstances. I hope that you will all extend the same flexibility to me. Please reach out if you need anything. The sooner I know you need help, the sooner we can make it happen. I will never ask for personal information if you come to me, but you can trust that I will treat anything you do tell me with respect and privacy. Again, please reach out if you need anything. Nothing we learn in class will be useful without your physical and mental health!

Course Objectives: This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to the economic theory surrounding labor markets and labor market issues. Our first major topics will be labor supply and labor demand. We will first consider supply and demand separately, and then consider how the two act together. We will then discuss human capital development. In the latter portion of the course, we will move on to discussing associated topics such as wage differentials, discrimination in the labor market, government involvement in labor markets, and unions.

Live & Recorded Lecture: Lecture will take place at 12:15-1:45PM (Pacific Time) via Zoom. Zoom meetings will be scheduled and accessible through Canvas. In order to make this course as accessible as possible, lecture recordings will also automatically be uploaded to canvas for viewing at any time. **Lecture attendance is not mandatory, but you are encouraged to attend lectures.**

Office Hours: My office hours will be held via Zoom on Monday and Wednesday at 9:30-10:25 AM, Pacific Time. You should also feel free to email me to make appointments outside of these times. One of the few unmitigated benefits of digital classes are that short Zoom meetings can be scheduled very quickly, so please take advantage of this option when needed.

Textbook: The required text is *Contemporary Labor Economics* by McConnell, Brue and Macpherson, 11th Edition. Digital versions are also available and acceptable. While we will follow the text quite closely, I do reserve the right to amend the reading list as we progress through the course. As a supplement to the required text, consider consulting *Labor Economics* by George Borjas or *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy* by Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Robert S. Smith.

Prerequisites: As indicated in the course catalog, EC201 is the required pre-req for this course. While EC311 is not a pre-req, I recommend taking it before taking EC350, as much of our material will build upon the concepts of optimization covered in that course. I will cover these topics as needed, but I will do so in less time and depth than in EC311.

Grading Policy: There are 400 points possible in this course. The traditional grade scale (90-100% → an A of some kind, 80-89% → a B of some kind, et cetera, modified by + and - where applicable) will be used as a baseline when determining course grades. The letter grades will never be worse than the traditional grade scale would imply, but a curve favorable to students may be applied depending on the overall performance of the class. Grades will be based on problem sets and quizzes conducted throughout the term, a midterm, and a final exam using the weights shown below:

Assignment	% of Grade	Points
Problem Sets (4; lowest score dropped)	30%	120 points (40 each)
Quizzes (10; lowest 2 scores dropped)	12%	48 points (6 each)
Poll Participation	up to 4.5%	up to 18 extra credit points
Midterm	25%	100 points
Final	33%	132 points

Those students taking this course pass/fail must earn a "C-" in the course in order to receive a passing grade. You will receive no grade in this course if it is found that you have not received a "C-" or better in the prerequisite EC201. Further, if you are not able to write the final exam for any reason, drop the course now (i.e., the "no makeup" policy below is not negotiable.)

Problem Sets: There will be 4 problem sets due during our course. Problem sets will be submitted on Canvas and will include exercises from our textbook, additional problems, and short answer questions based on lecture. Unless otherwise stated, you are allowed to collaborate in small groups on these assignments (up to 5 people). Each student must turn in their own work and must identify other students with whom they worked. Collaboration on these assignments is encouraged, word-for-word copying is not, and will be penalized with a lower grade. Copying problem set answers from online sources is also prohibited, and will be penalized with a lower grade. Repeated copying will constitute academic dishonesty (see below). The rough schedule of problem set due dates is included in the tentative schedule at the end of this syllabus. Exact due dates for each problem set will be listed on canvas and included on the problem set PDFs themselves. Late problem sets will not be accepted after the due date, and no make-up problem sets will be offered.

Since this course is taking place during a truly chaotic time, I recognize that a legitimate reason why you cannot complete a problem set may come up at the last minute. Consequently, the problem set with the lowest grade for every student will be dropped at the end of the term. The remaining 3 problem sets will each count for 10% of the final course grade.

Weekly Quizzes: There will be one quiz per week for a total of 10 quizzes. Quizzes will be completed through Canvas. You will have one timed 30 minute attempt for each quiz. Quizzes will be available to complete for one full day (Thursday). The quiz will open at midnight Wednesday night and be available until midnight Thursday night. Once you start the quiz, you have 30 minutes to finish *and submit* it. Quiz

questions will be a mix of questions on recent assigned readings, as well as short practice problems. Students are not allowed to communicate with each other about quizzes or assist each other in completing a quiz under any circumstances. Doing so will constitute academic dishonesty and will result in a grade of 0 on that quiz. Each student's two lowest quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the term. The remaining 8 quizzes will each be worth 1.5% of the final course grade. The two dropped quizzes policy is designed to deal with tech mishaps, a forgotten quiz, or any other snafus. As such, late quizzes will not be accepted, and no make-up quizzes will be offered.

Poll Participation (Extra Credit): Interaction in the classroom fosters academic success, and also improves the general quality of the course. To replicate this online, we will use Zoom's polling feature during lecture. Each lecture in which a student responds to at least half of the poll questions is worth an extra credit point. These points can be used to replace those lost on problem sets and quizzes, but not the midterm or final. Once the problem set and quiz scores are maxed out (at a total of 168 points) there is no further influence on the course score. For example, if a student earns all 48 points on the quizzes (after the lowest two scores are dropped) and 110 points on the problem sets (after the lowest score is dropped), and also earns 13 extra credit points via poll participation, the combined problem set and quiz score will be maxed out at 168, and the remaining 3 points will have no further effect on the course grade.

To earn the extra credit points you will need to be signed in to Zoom using your UO Zoom account so that I can track your responses. Instructions on how to do so can be found here: https://service.uoregon.edu/TDClient/2030/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=101392.

Midterm & Final: There will be both a midterm and final for this course, administered via Canvas during our scheduled lecture or final exam time. The final will be comprehensive. Both the midterm and the final will be open book, open notes. Note that I am designing the midterm and final with the knowledge that you will have access to your notes. Dates for the midterm and final are given below. Students are not allowed to communicate with each other about the exam or assist each other in completing the exam under any circumstances. Doing so will constitute academic dishonesty and will result in a failing grade on that test. Copying exam answers or other material from online sources is also prohibited, and will constitute cheating. If you know you cannot take the final or any other exam for personal reasons you should drop this class. If you miss an exam due to valid, unexpected reasons, get in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss your options, including shifting weight of the missed exam to the final. Any make-up test has to be taken within 7 days of the original test, will be different from the original test, and may be shorter in length.

Important Dates:

Last day to drop classes with no "W" recorded .... October 3$^{\text{rd}}$
Last day to register for classes .... October 4$^{\text{th}}$
Midterm .... (In class) Monday, November 2$^{\text{nd}}$
Last day to withdraw from classes ("W" recorded) .... November 15$^{\text{th}}$
Final Exam .... 10:15AM-12:15PM Wednesday, December 9$^{\text{th}}$

Grade Appeals: Any re-grading requests on a test or homework must be submitted in writing within 2 days of when grades and comments for the assignment are returned. A request should include an argument for why you feel your answer was correct. I will re-grade the entire question when a request is made.

Academic Integrity: The University Student Conduct Code defines academic misconduct, which includes unauthorized help on assignments and examinations and the use of sources without acknowledgment. Academic misconduct is prohibited at UO. I will report misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards—consequences can include failure of this course. As noted above, collaboration is allowed on homework but **not** on exams. I will ask you to certify that your exams are your own work. In order to ensure that each student is evaluated fairly, I will be very strict in the enforcement of the Student Conduct Code, which is published in the Schedule of Classes each term.

I do not consent to having notes from this class uploaded to the internet, including commercial note-selling websites. My course design is copyrighted by me and I do not consent to mass distribution of these materials. My lectures, including slide content, are my intellectual property and your creation of a derivative work (student notes from lecture) falls under this copyright protection. The distribution of course material (including your notes) to a commercial website falls under the UO's definition of plagiarism (see Student Conduct Code). Furthermore, such action violates UO's information technology "acceptable use policy" which prohibits use of its computing resources for commercial purposes.

Accessibility and Special Accommodations: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. If you are uncomfortable discussing these issues with me, or if you require special accommodations of any kind due to a documented disability, you are encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support.

This UO webpage includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support: https://blogs.uoregon.edu/basicneeds/food/

Tentative Schedule:

Week	Major Topic	Major Assignments	Readings
1	Introduction, Syllabus, "Big Picture" and Labor Market Statistics		*MBM* Ch. 1
2	Labor Supply		*MBM* Ch. 2
3	Labor Demand	Problem Set 1	*MBM* Ch. 5
4	Wages and Equilibrium		*MBM* Ch. 6
5	Human Capital Development	Problem Set 2	*MBM* Ch. 4
6	**Midterm** & Alternative Pay Schemes	Midterm (12:15 Monday, November 2$^{\text{nd}}$)	*MBM* Ch. 7
7	Wage Differentials & Migration		*MBM* Ch. 8, 9
8	Labor Market Discrimination	Problem Set 3	*MBM* Ch. 14
9	Government & Regulation		*MBM* Ch. 12, 13
10	Unions & Final Review	Problem Set 4	*MBM* Ch. 10, 11
11	**Final**	Final (10:15 December 9$^{\text{th}}$)	